



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers®**



**For Immediate Release**  
Oct. 15, 2008

**CONTACTS:** Corps of Engineers – Mark Haviland, 757-201-7673  
Virginia Marine Resources – John Bull, 757-247-2269  
Maryland DNR – Olivia Campbell, 410-260-8016

## **Team releases draft oyster EIS, seeks public comment**

**NORFOLK, Va. --** The Norfolk District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the Virginia Marine Resources Commission announced today the public release of a Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement that evaluate oyster restoration alternatives for the Chesapeake Bay.

This draft PEIS addresses the direct and indirect effects of the proposed action – the introduction of a nonnative species, the Suminoe oyster, and continued efforts to restore the native Eastern oyster, and eight alternatives – on ecological, environmental and human issues. The estimated costs and potential consequences of the alternatives are also addressed.

The document is the most comprehensive, multi-disciplinary oyster recovery study published to date, said Norfolk District Commander Colonel Dionysios Anninos, and involved the work of more than 90 scientists and several reviews by multiple independent panels.

“The public release of the draft PEIS is a significant milestone for the five-year study,” Anninos said. “The PEIS will lay the foundation for all future oyster recovery actions in the Bay and we look forward to the public’s input on this important topic.

“The document does not name a preferred alternative; however, we’ve narrowed the alternatives to three basic combinations. Through extensive research, we determined that no single alternative meets the established purpose and need of restoring the population,” Anninos explained.

The preferred strategy will be identified in the final version of the PEIS, which the team expects to publish in late spring 2009, following the public comment period.

The Draft PEIS, prepared in cooperation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Potomac River Fisheries Commission and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, includes an evaluation of the potential outcomes of a range of alternatives for restoring the native Eastern oyster (*Crassostrea virginica*), as well as the outcomes of an introduction of a nonnative species, the Suminoe oyster (*Crassostrea ariakensis*).

"This five-year effort built a sound scientific foundation on which to base a decision on whether to introduce a nonnative oyster species to the Chesapeake Bay," said Virginia Secretary of Natural Resources L. Preston Bryant, Jr. "Many, many scientists worked very hard on this and I thank them for their labors. Their work has been peer reviewed and those peer reviews have been peer reviewed. Exceptional diligence has been exercised.

"Now is the time for the public to make their voices heard. Public hearings will be held over the next two months and we eagerly await the public's input," Bryant said. "We are at the crossroads of an important decision. Rest assured, it will not be made lightly."

Maryland officials also praised the work of the PEIS team and echoed the importance of public feedback during the public comment period, Oct. 17 through Dec. 15.

"Thanks to the work of nearly one hundred scientists, we now have a significantly greater understanding of the ecological, economic, and cultural impacts of several different restoration strategies," said Maryland Department of Natural Resources Secretary John R. Griffin.

"Their work, along with public feedback, will help us decide the best way to re-establish a healthy, sustainable oyster population in the Chesapeake Bay -- a goal that we must ultimately accomplish for the future of the bay, our children and grandchildren. We hope that Marylanders will share their ideas and concerns as we work to identify, and begin to implement, the best strategies to achieve our restoration goals."

In order to facilitate public comment, the lead agencies have scheduled six public meetings, three in Virginia and three in Maryland. The schedule for those meeting is 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the following locations:

**Maryland:**

- Wednesday, Nov. 12, Calvert Marine Museum, 14200 HG Truman Road, Solomons, Md. 20688
- Thurs. November 13: Miller Senate Building, 11 Bladen Street, Annapolis, Md. 21401
- Friday, Nov. 14, Minnette Dick Memorial Hall (St. Mary's Catholic Church), 2000 Hambrooks Blvd., Cambridge, Md. 21613

**Virginia:**

- Wednesday, Nov. 5, Potomac River Fisheries Commission, 222 Taylor Street, Colonial Beach, Va. 22443

Friday, Nov. 7, VMRC main office 2600 Washington Avenue, 3rd Floor, Newport News, Va. 23607

Monday, Nov. 10, Nandua High School, 26350 Lankford Highway, Onley, Va. 23418

## DRAFT EIS RELEASE-3

Any person may formally comment on the PEIS but in order to be considered it is important to submit your comments prior to the close of the comment period. The 60-day comment period on the Draft PEIS ends December 15, 2008. All comments received on time including those provided orally at the public meetings, or in writing either by mail or electronically will be considered in preparing the Final PEIS.

Any comments should reference the Draft PEIS. Written comments should be mailed to: Department of the Army, Norfolk District, Corps of Engineers, Attn: Mr. Mark Mansfield, Planning and Policy Branch, Fort Norfolk, 803 Front Street, Norfolk, Virginia 23510-1096.

Electronic comments are strongly encouraged and can be submitted by email to Mr. Mansfield at the following address: [Mark.T.Mansfield@usace.army.mil](mailto:Mark.T.Mansfield@usace.army.mil).

Copies of the Draft PEIS are available for public review on the Norfolk District Web site at <http://www.nao.usace.army.mil/OysterEIS/homepage.asp> and at the following libraries:

- Anne Arundel Community College - Andrew G. Truxal Library – Arnold, Md.
- Anne Arundel Co. Public Library – Annapolis, Md.
- Calvert Co. Public Library – Prince Frederick, Md.
- Central Rappahannock Regional Library – Fredericksburg, Va.
- Chesapeake College Library – Wye Mills, Md.
- Corbin Memorial Library – Crisfield, Md.
- Dorchester Co. Public Library - Cambridge and Hurlock, Md.
- Eastern Shore Public Library – Accomac, Va
- Enoch Pratt Free Library – Baltimore, Md.
- Fairfax Co. Public Library – Fairfax, Va.
- Federal Maritime Commission Library – Washington, D.C.
- Henrico Co. Public Library – Richmond, Va.
- Kent Co. Public Library – Chestertown, Md.
- Lewis Egerton Smoot Memorial Library - King George, Va.
- Loudoun Co. Public Library – Leesburg, Va.
- MD State Law Library – Annapolis, Md.
- Norfolk Public Library – Norfolk, Va.
- Northumberland Public Library – Heathsville, Va.
- Petersburg Public Library – Petersburg, Va.
- Queen Anne's Co. Library – Stevensville and Centerville, Md.
- Richmond Public Library – Richmond, Va.
- Somerset Co. Library – Princess Anne and Ewell, Md.
- St. Mary's Co. Memorial Library – Leonardtown, Md.
- State Dept. of Legislative Reference Library – Annapolis, Md.
- Sudlersville Memorial Library – Sudlersville, Md.
- Talbot Co. Free Library - St. Michaels, Easton and Tilghman (Elementary School), Md.
- Calvert Co. Library – Twin Beaches Branch - Chesapeake Beach, Md.
- Virginia Beach Public Library – Virginia Beach, Va.
- Wicomico Co. Free Library – Salisbury, Md.

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